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ABSTRACT

A picture book is defined as a book in which the illustrations are as important as the text or written story. Picture books published today seem appropriate and exciting for anyone from 1 to 100 years old. Among the many kinds of picture books are Mother Goose books; toy books (board books, pop-up books, concept books, flap books, cloth books, and plastic books); alphabet books; counting books; concept books; wordless picture books; and easy-to-read books. When using this genre, educators must consider how the book will be received by students. Educators should always consider award-winning books when selecting picture books--for picture books, the Caldecott Award is considered the most prestigious. Various selection aids can also help educators select picture books. Picture books' universal appeal make them a good resource for use at all grade levels and in content areas such as physical education, social studies, language arts, art classes, music, mathematics, and science. (A 26-item bibliography and a 32-item bibliography of picture books arranged by content area are attached.) (RS)

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ED 402 543

Using Picture Books Kindergarten Through High School

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Confucius said that a picture is worth a thousand words. It really sounds like what most children say when asked by an adult what makes a book special. Most children will answer, "The pictures." When looking at the picture books being published today they seem appropriate and exciting for anyone from 1 to 100 years old. Today's picture books are not being written just for young children. Many of the illustrations in picture books are of such quality one would want to hang them in the classroom or even the living room at home. A good example is Thomas Locker's book The Boy Who Held Back the Sea, the pictures have a museum quality. The authors and illustrators of picture books are writing and illustrating books in such a way that everyone is able to enjoy them.

A picture book is defined as a book in which the illustrations are as important as the text or written story (Harris and Hodges, 1981). When an educator decides to use picture books in the classroom, he/she must consider the value of using the book. According to Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (1993) the value of picture books include the following: 1) hearing good picture books read aloud regularly can help children learn to read and value reading; 2) sharing picture books with children fosters language development; 3) picture books can foster in children appreciation of art; and 4) visual clues enable nonreaders and beginning readers to enjoy pictures by themselves.

There are many kinds of picture books and they can include Mother Goose books; toy books (board books, pop-up books, flap books, cloth books, and plastic books); alphabet books; counting books; concept books; word-less picture books; and easy-to-read books. When using this genre an educator must consider how the book will be received by the students. Jalongo (1988) offers the following suggestions for selecting a picture book:

Step 1: Quickly look over the book to get a feel for the tone and approach.

Step 2: Read just the text, mentally blocking out the art.

Step 3: Read the story carefully while focusing on the harmony if the words and pictures backtracking and pausing whenever you feel like it.

Step 4: Carefully look at the other details such as book design, paper type, endpapers, dedications, etc.

Other questions to be consider include:

1. What is the illustrator attempting to do?
2. Why is a certain effect used? Is it successful?

3. Are the illustrations or photographs aesthetically pleasing and of good quality?
4. Are the story and pictures well integrated?
5. Is there continuity from page to page?
6. Has the artist considered the constraints of format?
7. Has the child been kept in mind? What age child?
8. Could a young child get a sense of the basic concepts of story sequence by looking at the pictures?
9. What about balance, harmony, mood, composition, line, and color?

When considering the selection of a picture book that is appropriate for use in the classroom and the subject matter to be taught, it is important to examine can be learned from the literary work. Kiefer (1995) states that students should learn to appreciate excellence in writing and illustrations represented in the book. Students can also learn to interpret and evaluate literature in its many different forms (Rosen and Martinez, 1985). Research by Solsken (1985) states that students learn to communicate more effectively by incorporating the contents, vocabulary, and linguistic complexity found in literature. Learners will broaden their perspective in viewing the different cultures and individuals in less stereotypic ways (Sims, 1982). Finally, students need to select books that suit their interests (Helper and Hickman, 1982).

As an educator selects picture books to use in the classroom he/she should always consider award winning books. For picture books the Caldecott Award is the most prestigious and well-known. The Award is named for Randolph Caldecott, a nineteenth century English illustrator. This Award has been given since 1938 on an annual basis to the United States artist, who has created the most distinguished children's picture book published during the preceding year. The Award is granted for artistic quality including line, color, shape, texture, and medium. The Award is presented by the American Library Association. A selection committee from this association makes these awards, with a Gold Medal for the best book in the field and Silver Medals for the runner-ups (Immroth, 1990).

Choosing the right book for a particular content area and age level can be time-consuming and frustrating without some guidance. There are some books to help in the selection of the proper book for the occasion. They are called appropriately selection aids. One of the best is A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books by Carolyn W. Lima and John A. Lima. It is the most comprehensive guide for picture books. It contains more than fourteen thousand titles cataloged under nearly eight hundred subjects (Lima and Lima, 1993). This selection aid has a subject guide, author index, illustrations index, title index and complete bibliographic information: author, title, illustrator, publisher, date of publication, miscellaneous notes, ISBN number and subjects.

Other selection aids contain other kinds of books and are not exclusively devoted to picture books. The classic in the field is The Children's Catalog; it is a basic bibliography of the best recommended books for children (Yaakov and Price, 1991). Each entry in the catalog is annotated, and contains complete bibliographic information. There is a combined alphabetical author, title and subject index for each edition. The Horn Book Guide is issued biannually and includes short critical annotations for all hardcover trade books for children and young adults published in the United States within a six month period (Zeiger, 1994). It contains a special section for picture books arranged alphabetically by author's name. Separate indexes for subject, titles, and author/illustrator are included.

There are nine key suggestions for reading a picture book according to Anderson and Lapp (1988). The suggestions are: 1) gather the children closely around you either on low chairs or on the floor; 2) sit on a low chair yourself; 3) perform unhurriedly; 4) handle the book so that the students can see the pages at close range; 5) know the story well enough so that you do not need to keep your eyes on the page at all times; 6) point out types of minute details in the pictures so that the children will look for them in subsequent reading of the book; 7) encourage laughter and

spontaneous remarks; 8) make illustrations as personal as possible by relating them to the children's experiences; and 9) impart your own enjoyment of the book.

Picture books' universal appeal (Neal and Moore, 1991) make them a good resource for use in the content areas at all grade levels. Neal and Moore (1991) give many good reasons for using picture books at the middle and secondary levels. Some of the best picture books have been published in the last ten to fifteen years and students of middle and high school age may not have had the opportunity to see and read them. Many issues raised in more recent picture books require a maturity level of understanding and background that young children do not possess.

Picture books fits into many content areas teaching strategies because of their short form. For example, in the area of physical education, the teacher can read part of the book to illustrate movement. Kane (1994) notes that success in learning a new movement depends in part on the students' abilities to create a image of the movement in their minds. A picture books' illustrations and story can help create this image; they can dramatize a movement or idea in a way that is otherwise impossible to create in the gym. For example, when using Hoban's Over, Under and Through, the children can identify the relationship of objects to children in the pictures. Then the students can do their own versions of the movement.

Social Studies offers many opportunities for the use of literature in the form of picture books. In geography, Sisson (1990) suggests that students read books with settings across the United States to explore different regions of the country. In Stringbean's Trip to the Shining Sea, Stringbean and his brother Fred send home postcards and snapshots of their trip across the United States. Have the students look at a map of each place pictured in the book and discuss how the physical features of the places the boys visited are depicted in the book.

Teachers can use the characters, plot, settings, themes, and relationships in selected works of children's fiction to develop activities to promote citizenship skills

according to McGowan (1987). Children build citizenship skills in order to function productively in American society, and picture books can provide pictures about the ways in which people live or lived in different times in America. The Oxcart Man is a good example of how self-sufficient early American had to be. Peggy Sharp (1984) suggests other issues addressed in picture books that can be included in the area of social studies are aging, other cultures and countries, or ancient civilizations.

The language arts classes offers many opportunities for the use of picture books. Sokoloski and Dreher (1985) maintain that picture books are quite valuable in developing literary analysis skills, because of their quality and manageable length. Use them to help students identify development of characters and mood. For example, what similar moods can be found in The Snowy Day and Owl Moon? Writing opportunities include patterned writing, writing stories for wordless picture books, vocabulary development and word games.

Picture books in art classes are a rich teaching resource for promoting students understanding of artistic elements and art history (Neal, 1991 and Sharp, 1984). Most art styles, techniques and mediums are represented in picture books. Some of the styles found in these authors' picture books are collage (Ehlert and Carle), photography (Freeman and Andersen), cartoons (Seuss), and expressionism (Yashima and Shulevitz). Picture books also contain a wide range of mediums, such as collage, embroidery, acrylic, pencil, ink, watercolor, oil, and silkscreen. The techniques employed are as diverse as the mediums from Ackerman's The Song and Dance Man's composition to Ehlert's Feathers for Lunch's shapes.

There are some delightful books about how music is produced, background of famous pieces of music, music history and biography for use in music classes. Students can read about Beethoven and Mozart in the books Beethoven Lives Upstairs and Mozart: Scenes From the Childhood of the Great Composer. They can see how a big orchestra gets ready for a concert in The Philharmonic Gets Dressed.

and learn more about the ballet from the book Of Swans, Sugarplums, and Satin Slippers.

There are also many picture books that deal with basic mathematical concepts, counting, estimation, subtraction, and addition just to mention a few. Many of Anno's books deal with math concepts, such as Anno's Counting House and Anno's Mysterious Multiplying Jar. The book Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back deals with the different ways Native Americans count the days and months of the year.

Topics such as environmental awareness, dinosaurs, how machines work, the lives of insects and animals, and weather are only a few of those found in picture books for the science classroom (McMath, 1993). Both Stellaluna and Is This a House for a Hermit Crab? provide a manageable imaginative lesson about a certain species. The journal of Science and Children provides a yearly list of trade books to use in the classroom.

We hope that suggested teaching strategies and picture book bibliography will spark your interest in using the wealth of picture books available today.

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